

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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R 161450Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4807
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN UNN
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 6049

E O 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PGOV CGEN WB GE US UK FR
SUBJ: TERMINOLOGY FOR ALLIED EMBASSIES IN EAST BERLIN

REF: BONN 7934

1. WE HAVE REVIEWED THE PROPOSAL TO CONSIDER REQUIRING THE GDR TO CEASE REFERRING OFFICIALLY TO ALLIED EMBASSIES AS BEIN "IN THE GDR" VERY CAREFULLY. THE MFA HERE HAS ADDRESSED ALL OF ITS NOTES TO "THE EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE GDR" SINCE THIS POST HAS OPENED; WE HAVE ACCEPTED THEM. THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE BRITISH AND FRENCH EMBASSIES HERE. FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE REGULARLY EMPLOYED CONSULAR SEALS USING THE TERMINOLOGY, "TO THE GDR", ON OUR NOTES. THE GDR HAS JUST AS REGULARLY ACCEPTED SUCH NOTES.

2. WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM THAT SUCH LANGUAGE AS "IN THE GDR" POSES FOR US POLICY ON BERLIN, WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT BEGIN A FIGHT ON SUCH TERMINOLOGY
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UNLESS TWO PRE-CONDITIONS ARE MET. THESE WOULD BE
A) THAT THE CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT WE WOULD WIN, E.G. THAT THE GDR WOULD ALIGN ITS LANGUAGE WITH ALLIED WISHES, AND B) THE CONSEQUENCES OF EITHER LOSS OR PROTRACTED WRANGLING WOULD NOT BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO US SUGGESTS THAT THESE TWO PRE-CONDITIONS WOULD NOT LIKELY BE MET.

A) GIVEN THE DEGREE OF POLITICAL AND, INDEED, EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT OF THE GDR TO ITS POSITION THAT THE SOVIET SECTOR OF BERLIN IS ITS CAPITAL, IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE MFA WOULD GIVE ANY BUT THE SHORTEST SHRIFT TO AN ALLIED APPROACH TO USE THE LANGUAGE WE DESIRE. THEY WOULD LIKELY CURTLY REJECT OUR REQUEST AND CLAIM THAT IT WAS AN INTERVENTION IN THEIR INTERNAL BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES AS WELL AS THEIR SOVEREIGN RIGHTS. THEY MIGHT ALSO RESPOND THAT THEY DO NOT SEEK TO CORRECT THE FORMULATION WE EMPLOY BY REJECTING NOTES WE SEND TO THEM ON SUCH MATTERS AS GDR VISAS, DIPLOMATIC IDS, FACILITATION OF ENTRY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT PERSONNEL FROM WEST BERLIN TO EAST BERLIN AND THE LIKE - ALL ESSENTIALS TO OUR WORK.

B) IF WE THEN STEPPED UP THE CAMPAIGN BY RETURNING NOTES ADDRESSED TO US IMPROPERLY, WE ESTIMATE THAT THE GDR MFA WOULD IMMEDIATELY RETALIATE BY REJECTING OUR NOTES BECAUSE OF THE FORMULATION OF OUR SEALS.

C) THE EMBASSY AND THE MFA HAVE, IN EFFECT, DEVELOPED A MODUS VIVENDI IN WHICH EACH TOLERATES THE OTHER'S OBJECTIONABLE LANGUAGE. THE PURPOSE HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BILATERAL BUSINESS. WHAT WE WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE IS WHETHER WE CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD BE WILLING TO BURDEN THAT BILATERAL BUSINESS BY STARTING A FIGHT WHICH WE HAD LITTLE LIKLIHOOD OF WINNING AND WHERE WE MIGHT ULTIMATELY LOSE MORE IN PRESTIGE AND DIGNITY THAN WE COULD WIN.

4. OUR FRENCH COLLEAGUES TELL US THAT, WHEN THEIR EMBASSY FIRST OPENED, THE GDR MFA HAD REFUSED TO ACCEPT THEIR FORMULATION, "TO THE GDR" ("BEI DER DDR") AND THE FRENCH HAD THEN REFUSED THEIR NOTES WITH THE "IN DER DDR" LANGUAGE. HOWEVER, THEY SHORTLY AGREED THAT EACH WOULD USE THEIR OWN FORMULATION WHICH THE OTHER WOULD ACCEPT.

5. THE BRITISH HAVE ALSO FOLLOWED THE PRACTICE OF ACCEPTING THE GDR FORMULATION WITH THE GDR RECEIVING NOTES WITH THE UK LANGUAGE. A BRITISH EMBASSY OFFICER INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS NO CHANCE WHATSOEVER OF THE GDR MFA ACCEPTING THE CHANGE THAT THE ALLIES IDEALLY WOULD LIKE.

6. COMMENT: WE, FOR OUR PART, BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD
EMPLOY NEITHER OF THE STEPS DESCRIBED IN PARAS. 4 AND
5 OF REFTEL AND CONTINUE THE CURRENT PRACTICE. WE GAIN THE IM-
PRESSION FROM OUR DISCUSSION WITH THE BRITISH AND
THE FRENCH THAT THIS IS ALSO THE VIEWS OF THEIR EMBASSIES
IN EAST BERLIN.POLANSKY

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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